

SKIRMISHES

i.

She is singing in the shower.
I sneak into the bathroom
removing her clothes and
all the towels.
After awhile
she turns the water off
and curses follow.
She sputters into the living room
intent on confrontation.
I am stark naked
and rearing to go.
Our passion sizzles away
her wetness.

ii.

She insists on serving vegetables
I can't stand.
Reminiscent of my mother
she says,
"There's more to life
than peas and corn,
eat your asparagus."

I stare at the limp green stalks,
torpedoes
homed in on our marriage.

iii.

She has wrecked the car.
I remain calm.

Weeks later she says it
never would have happened
if I'd driven to the store
instead
like I was supposed to.

Fighting back visions of her
plastered against the wall,
I retreat to a local penny arcade
where I assault a pinball machine
losing every game.

iv.

She has thrown out Maynard,
a dress of hers I really liked.
It was fake fur and gold chains
a real lust inciter.

She says our relationship has
progressed beyond the Maynards
of this world.

For Christmas she'll get
sackcloth and ashes.

v.

She wants to stay
in a class motel,
one where the room phones
are color coordinated.

I give in
though my predilection is for
comfortable fleabags with
lots of character.

The color tv blares
the magic fingers vibrate;
she is in her element.

I go into the bathroom
and destroy a box of
sanitized toilet seat covers.

-- Robert Matte

Berkeley CA

HALLOWEEN

The kid went out alone
as Fat Albert,
two pillows stuffed under his
shirt and soot smeared on his
face. He came in early
saying nothing much was
happening. By 9:30
no one had come knocking.
By 11:00 we blew out the
candles in the jack-o-lanterns
and went to bed.

It's a sign of some sort.
All over the city plates of
candy sit untouched.
It makes housewives uneasy.
The candy makers
will have a conference
over this.

What are the children
up to?